

Children and adolescents need 60 minutes of physical activity daily. Physical activities should make your heart beat faster and your breathing heavier than normal. Every minute counts – if you don't have an hour, 10 minutes here and there will add up throughout the day

Benefits of Physical Activity

- Helps children's overall mental well-being
- Increases energy and endurance inside and outside of the classroom
- Helps children sleep better
- Relieves everyday stress and anxiety
- Aids in lowering risk of diabetes and heart disease
- Helps maintain normal weight
- Helps boost self-confidence

Consider these ideas:

- Be a role model to your children. If they see you being physically active and having fun, they are more likely to be active and stay active throughout their lives
- Involve the whole family in activities like hiking, biking, dancing, basketball, roller skating or ice skating
- Focus on fun. You can do a lot of walking during trips to the zoo, aquarium, park, or miniature-golf course
- Include children in household activities like dog-walking, car washing, or lawn mowing
- Limit screen time – TV, computer, and video games - to less than 2 hours a day
- Encourage physical activity every day
- If your child is interested in participating in a sport, be supportive of their efforts
- Try having sit-up or dance contests during television commercials
- Use music to get moving while indoors and to put a twist on household chores
- Looking for something new? Try judo, yoga, or tai-chi. These disciplines emphasize a mind-body connection
- Incorporate physical activity into birthday parties and family gatherings
- If you have not been participating in physical activity start slowly and add new fun activities each week
- Involve your children in jobs or community service activities that they enjoy and that get them moving, such as planting in the local park or helping neighbors with cleaning, dog walking, or yard work
- Find outdoor activities through nature groups or hiking clubs
- Take advantage of your city's recreational opportunities from soccer leagues to fun runs to walking tours
- Take advantage of city parks, bike paths, swimming pools, and playgrounds

Where can I get more information?

- www.ActionForHealthyKids.org
- Ways to keep your child active -- www.60PLAY.com
- Game activity ideas for children and families -- www.VERBNOW.com
- Kids Health-parent, child, and adolescent information -- www.kidshealth.org/index
- Max's Magical Delivery: Fit for Kids a fun interactive DVD targeted to children 5-9 and their families -- <http://www.ahrq.gov/child/dvdobesity.htm>

